



Request for Applications



RFA # 002-ITCCDF-2022

TITLE: Integrating Trauma-informed Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Child Care Settings

FUNDING AGENCY: NC DHHS/Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

ISSUE DATE: February 14, 2022

RECEIPT DEADLINE: Applications, subject to the following conditions, must be received no later than **5:00 pm, March 25, 2022.**

EMAIL an electronic PDF of your application to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education via this email: DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov.

The signature of an authorized official is required on the application face sheet. An electronic signature or an electronic scanned copy of the signed application face sheet will be accepted. **Only electronic application submissions via email will be accepted, i.e., do not mail, fax, or deliver copies of the application to DCDEE's physical or mailing address.**

INTENT TO APPLY: Eligible agencies and/or organizations interested in applying for this RFA are encouraged to notify DCDEE of their intent to apply via the following link, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CMRNC6G> no later than **5:00 pm, February 23, 2022.** Agencies are **not** required to notify of their intent to respond to this RFA; this information is requested to assist DCDEE in planning.

BIDDER'S CONFERENCE: DCDEE plans on hosting a Bidder's Conference for this RFA on **February 15, 2022 at 2:30 pm.** During this time an overview of the RFA will be presented along with an opportunity for Q&A. Click the link below to join the session:
<https://ncgov.webex.com/ncgov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e62fbdbd666b87c57dd9a7b756c28c729>

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES concerning this Request for Applications in writing to:
Theresa Roedersheimer, Infant Toddler Policy Consultant
Email address: DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov

IMPORTANT NOTE: Questions concerning the specifications, or any information contained within this Request for Applications (RFA) must be received no later than **5:00 pm, February 23, 2022.** All questions must be received in writing, via electronic mail to: DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov. Responses to all questions received by the deadline

will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) website <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New> no later than **5:00 pm, February 25, 2022.**

ELIGIBILITY: This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public and private nonprofit organizations with a current 501(c)(3) standing with knowledge of early childhood education (ECE) systems, effective policies, and practices at all levels of the ECE infrastructure, a demonstrated ability to develop and execute equity focused projects, and program design and evaluation expertise. Also experience in compensation/incentive planning and design as well as human resource solutions.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY: This RFA will be for a 3-year funding cycle for the following State Fiscal Years: 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025. Approximately \$500,000 will be available to support each funding year. One award will be funded through this announcement.

DCDEE will determine the actual funding amount based on the proposed execution of the project and the utilization of funds as outlined in the successful applicant's proposal, pending funding availability.

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Funding Source:

1. Funding Type	Discretionary
2. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)	2101NCCCDF
3. Federal Award Date (see § 200.39 Federal award date)	02/03/2021
4. Total Amount of the Federal Award (awarded to DCDEE)	\$133,621,971.00
5. Federal award project description, as required to be responsive to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)	Child Care Development Fund - To make grants to States and Tribes to assist low-income families with child care and to: (1) Allow each State maximum flexibility in developing child care programs and policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within State; (2) promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions on the child care that best suits their family's needs; (3) encourage States to provide consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care; (4) assist States to provide child care to parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance; and (5) assist States in implementing the health, safety, licensing, and registration standards established in State regulations
6. Name of Federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, and contact information for awarding official	Federal DHHS Office Administration for Children and Families Christopher Felton Grants Management Officer

	Christopher.felton@acf.hhs.gov 617-565-2443 NC DHHS/DCDEE 333 Six Forks Road Raleigh, NC 27609
7. CFDA Number and Name; the pass-through entity must identify the dollar amount made available under each Federal award and the CFDA number at the time of disbursement	CFDA# 93.575 Child Care and Development Block Grant
8. Identification of whether the award is R&D	No

Federal Requirements on indirect cost rates and calculations according to 2 C.F.R. 200.414:

1. If your agency has or establishes a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (FNIR), then the agency is not allowed to charge the “de minimis” rate of 10% (or some other amount) for indirect costs, as directed by 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
2. Agencies with an FNIR are required to charge their agreed upon rate for their indirect costs and include cost items as determined by the FNIR in their indirect costs.
3. Negotiation of indirect cost rates in excess of the “de minimis” rate of 10% are performed by the NC DHHS Office of the Controller, Cost Analysis and Administration section if funds are awarded to your agency:

Cost Analysis/Federal Financial Reporting/Administration
DHHS Office of the Controller
NC Department of Health and Human Services
1050 Umstead Dr
Raleigh, NC 27699-2019
Phone: 919-855-3696

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I. INTRODUCTION

More than a quarter of children experience or witness a traumatic event before the age of four, and this number jumps to 49% for those living in poverty. These traumatic experiences can lead to changes in neurobiology, regulatory systems, and attachment. When the body's stress system is repeatedly activated and caregiver support is insufficient to provide a protective buffer of safety and co-regulation, changes in brain structure and function can occur. These changes are meant to be protective against immediate danger, but the long-term impact on wellbeing may be negative. Over time, neurochemical reactions to stress can lead to impairments in memory, attention, mood, and impulse control (van der Kolk et al., 2005). As a result, once in school, children with cumulative trauma experiences score lower on standardized tests, are 2.5 times more likely to be retained, are up to 32 times more likely to be labeled as learning disabled, and are more likely to be suspended and expelled.

Children's early experiences have a profound impact on their later development. Young children rely on caregivers for safety and for meeting their physical and emotional needs. When adults form positive nurturing relationships with young children, children are better able to manage their emotions, and rates of expulsion from early care and education settings go down. High quality care from warm, sensitive caregivers may buffer the effects of stressors in the family or environment, decreasing vulnerability and increasing resilience (Hamoudi, Murray, Sorensen, & Fontaine, 2015; Watson & Kowalski, 1999). Children also exhibit fewer behavior problems, have an increased ability to focus, and develop more positive relationships with peers and adults because of receiving high quality care.

School-level trauma-informed initiatives have shown outcomes such as 30-90% reduction in suspensions, 43% reduction in aggression, 34% increase in school attendance, and increases in student time on task and test scores. States have been encouraged to ensure that early childhood educator preparation and other training programs incorporate the latest research-informed content on social-emotional development, trauma, family engagement, child screenings and referrals to specialized services, and positive behavioral guidance, and provide ample opportunities to implement the content in practicum experiences. The Division is seeking to continue and expand its recent efforts.

II. BACKGROUND

North Carolina is guided by its vision where all young children get a healthy start and develop to their full potential in safe and nurturing families, schools, and communities. With the drafting of the statewide Early Childhood Action Plan, North Carolina has set explicit goals around early learning. North Carolina strives to become a state that ensures that all young children experience the conditions they need to build strong brain architecture and school readiness skills that support their success in school and in life. Access to high-quality child care programs provides an opportunity to promote resilience and positive social-emotional development, with the potential to identify needs and change developmental trajectories.

Beginning in federal year 2017, states were required to spend at least 3% of their Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) awards on activities to improve the quality of infant and toddler care (Pub.L.113-235 and Section 658G(a)(2)). These quality activities include items such as supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce, improving the implementation of early learning and development guidelines, improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers, and activities to improve the quality of child care services with outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten readiness. In Spring 2018, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) sought proposals for projects through a Request for Applications (RFA) process that would align with the quality activities described above that would enhance the experiences of infant and toddler care in early child care and education settings.

The Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University was awarded a 3-year contract to build a trauma-informed professional development framework for infant and toddler teachers and their administrators, as well as for the specialists and technical assistance providers who support them. The goal was to promote understanding of the impacts of stress and trauma on infants and toddlers; develop infant and toddler teacher skills to form supportive, resilience-building relationships and environments; and identify strategies to support child care provider health and wellbeing.

The landmark Leandro ruling reaffirmed North Carolina's constitutional duty to ensure all children must receive a sound basic education. Subsequent rulings require North Carolina to identify specific resources needed to ensure that all children, including those who are at-risk or from rural and underserved communities, have access to a sound basic education, including access to early childhood education for children at-risk. Since the court issued the Leandro ruling in 1997 and the subsequent Hoke County Board of Education ruling in 2004, North Carolina has struggled to live up to this constitutional requirement.

The January 21, 2020, Leandro Consent Order and the subsequent June 15, 2020, Joint Report submitted to the court addresses the establishment of a system of early education that provides access to high-quality prekindergarten and other early childhood learning opportunities. These programs should develop all students' personal, social, cognitive, and language skills to prepare Him or her to begin kindergarten fully ready to learn.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful applicant will implement a statewide system of ongoing professional development for the infant and toddler workforce that supports ongoing learning in trauma-informed care and social-emotional development, develop workplace standards, specific to the needs of North Carolina's child care workforce that will improve the child care workplace environment, and design virtual professional development opportunities introducing the child care responsive caregiving practices.

A. Implement a statewide system of ongoing professional development for the infant & toddler workforce that supports ongoing learning in trauma-informed care and social-emotional development.

The plan shall align with DCDEE's Infant Toddler Trauma-Informed Care Curriculum outlined as follows:

1. Motivational interviewing skills training for early childhood technical assistance practitioners.
2. Convening a virtual community of practice for technical assistance participants.
3. Providing mentoring and professional development to early education professionals and system leaders around diversity, equity, inclusion and embedding trauma informed practices in their organizations.
4. Implementing a trauma-informed care curriculum with child care programs, which includes:
 - a. Providing on-site coaching and training to child care program administrators for a minimum of 3 hours per month for at least 3-6 months.
 - b. Providing on-site coaching and training to child care program teaching staff for a minimum of 3 hours per month per classroom for at least 3-6 months.
 - c. Co-leading staff workshops at participating child care programs.
 - d. Coaching and training topics shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - i. Self-care
 - ii. Mindfulness
 - iii. Impacts of trauma & traumatic stress
 - iv. Understanding and responding to child care workforce stress
 - v. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
 - vi. Self-regulation & co-regulation
 - vii. Strengthening families
 - viii. Strengthening community connections

B. Develop workplace standards that will improve the child care workplace environment. Design and implement a plan to provide coaching and professional development to assist program leaders in embedding the standards in their daily practices.

The child care workforce plays a critical role in children's development. The child care workforce is charged with the task of performing a job that supports young children's early learning, physical and mental health, and family wellbeing.

Teacher-child relationships contribute to the development of young children's social-emotional competence. Staff wellness is tied to child wellness. Teacher stress can interfere with positive teacher-child relationships and effective social-emotional teaching. Job stressors in the workplace negatively influence one's psychological, social, and physiological well-being.

The workforce needs a healthy working environment to provide high quality care. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), DCDEE, and the Office of Head Start is committed to promoting and prioritizing needed supports for staff. As programs continue to move toward recovering from COVID-19, funding supports are available through the American Rescue Plan Act to support staff wellness efforts. Recommendations created through this activity will assist program leaders build work environments that are supportive and minimize stress.

Applicants can reference the following resources:

1. Existing models, such as the Model Work Standards for [Centers](#) and [Homes](#).
2. Head Start Standard [45 CFR § 1302.45 Child mental health and social and emotional well-being](#)
3. Head Start Standard [45 CFR § 1302.90 Personnel policies](#)
4. Head Start Standard [45 CFR § 1302.93 Staff health and wellness](#)

C. Design virtual professional development opportunities introducing child care professionals to responsive caregiving practices and introducing trauma-informed practices.

DCDEE wants to ensure that North Carolina's child care programs have professional development opportunities available to prepare teachers to recognize behaviors typical of young children who have experienced trauma and have the skills and competencies to create settings that are responsive to the needs of traumatized children. Training topics may include identifying trauma in young children, developmental and behavioral screening, fostering social-emotional development, implementing positive behavior management strategies, fostering secure attachments with young children, delivering culturally competent services, and building self-reflective strategies to identify and correct potential biases in interactions with children and their families.

D. Program Design

Provide a detailed description of the following:

1. The population that will be served.
2. An outline of the planned activities during the optional planning/development phase and implementation phase.
3. Policies and/or programs to be addressed through the project.
4. Program performance goals and objectives.
5. Gaps in data or research pertaining to the activity area.
6. An analysis of barriers to the funding and provision of high-quality early child care and education services and supports, and identify opportunities for more efficient use of resources, as applicable.

7. Recommend partnerships, collaborations and quality improvement activities and opportunities that can leverage existing resources to improve coordination, policy alignment, program quality, and service delivery

Performance Monitoring and Evaluating System

Develop a plan to establish performance monitoring at multiple levels of operations, from programmatic to participant levels, and regularly reported, evaluated, and used performance information for continuous quality enhancement. The evaluation system shall include methods for process and outcome evaluation.

1. Establish a logic model with clear linkages to performance measures that guides the program's resources, activities, and intended outcomes.
2. Describe the diversity of population that will be served.
3. Establish a basic manual for service delivery that includes standard operating procedures to ensure consistent delivery across a wide geographic area.
4. Develop measures and a plan for fidelity of program delivery.
5. Define data and data collection methods with clear linkages to performance standard outcomes.
6. Determine a system of monitoring the program's performance to gauge the effectiveness in meeting program outcomes.
7. Identify standardized and culturally sensitive/equity-informed assessment tools in the program's performance monitoring that are appropriate and relevant to the target area(s) to be measured.
 - a. Intended tools to assess teacher and child outcomes
8. Identify a process for using data to identify program's strengths and needs.
 - a. Develop and implement plans that address program's needs, and continually evaluate compliance with program performance standards and progress towards achieving program goals described in paragraph.

Expected Outcomes

1. Reduce child care staff secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue.
2. Increase staff wellness, resilience, and job satisfaction.
3. Decrease the statewide separation rates for full-time teachers (workforce turnover).
4. Increase the percentage of early childhood teachers with the knowledge and skills to recognize the signs of trauma.
5. Increase teachers' ability to communicate and collaborate with families, professionals, and communities to establish and nurture supportive relationships.
6. Increase the leadership competency, knowledge, and skills of child care administrators.

Suggested Timeline of Outputs:

Project Planning	August 1, 2022- December 31, 2022 (optional)
Project Implementation	January 1, 2023- July 31, 2025
Evaluation/Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct quarterly programmatic update meeting with DCDEE staff.• Complete quarterly reports to be submitted to the contract administrator January 30, 2023, 2024, and 2025.• Conduct an Annual Program Evaluation by July 31, 2023, and 2024 .
Final Report	Summarize Overall effect of the intervention to include an analysis of the expected program outcomes due July 31, 2025.

IV. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reports** – Provide data as requested by DCDEE to meet federal reporting requirements. This includes submitting monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting by the deadlines provided by DCDEE in order to meet any submission date required from the federal funder.
2. **Annual Reporting** – Assess barriers of program implementation and participation. Create an annual action plan to address barriers and increase outreach efforts.
3. **Feedback** – Providing feedback at least monthly to DCDEE is required throughout the duration of the grant to contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.

V. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY

Applicants must exhibit comprehensive knowledge of North’s Carolina’s early childhood education mixed delivery system and expertise in conducting research in and designing programs that address the negative effects of trauma on young children and their families and approaches to prevent adverse childhood experiences and promoting resilience. Preference will be given to applicants with a demonstrated ability to develop and execute equity-focused projects. An explanation of or submission of work products that demonstrate similar or relevant efforts are required.

VI. LINE-ITEM BUDGET & NARRATIVE

The applicant will submit three line-item budgets: one for the work the applicant anticipates completing during the period of August 1, 2022-July 31, 2023, one for August 1, 2023-July 31, 2024, and one for August 1, 2024-July 31, 2025. The budgets must address the cost to complete deliverables outlined in this RFA. A narrative justification must be included for

every expense listed in the budgets. Each justification should show how the amount on the line-item budget was calculated, and it should be clear how the expense relates to the project's activities. The total for each budget may not exceed \$500,000 per year.

Travel Reimbursement Rates

Mileage reimbursement rates must be based on rates determined by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). Because mileage rates fluctuate with the price of fuel, the OSBM will release the "Change in IRS Mileage Rate" memorandum to be found on OSBM's website when there is a change in this rate.

For other travel related expenses, please refer to the current rates for travel and lodging reimbursement presented in the chart below. However, please be advised that reimbursement rates periodically change. DCDEE will only reimburse for rates authorized in OSBM's North Carolina Budget Manual or adopted by means of an OSBM Budget Memo. These documents are located here: <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budget/budget-manual#Sect51>.

Current Rates for Travel and Lodging

Meals	In State	Out of State
Breakfast	\$9.00	\$9.00
Lunch	\$11.80	\$11.80
Dinner	\$20.50	\$23.30
Lodging (<i>Maximum rate per person, excludes taxes and fees</i>)	\$78.90	\$93.20
Total Travel Allowance Per Day	\$120.20	\$137.30
Mileage	\$0.585 cents per mile	

VII. APPLICATION CONTENT & FORMAT

The submitted electronic application must be formatted to print on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins of 1 inch, except for the spreadsheets used in the budget template. Line spacing should be single-spaced. Use Calibri or Times New Roman font **only** no smaller than an 11-point font. All proposals must include the following (*** indicates form included in RFA posting**).

1. **Application Checklist***: Summarizes the application components to be submitted.
2. **Application Face Sheet***: Requires electronic or scanned signature of authorized authority.
3. **Proposal Summary**: Provides a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the activities the applicant proposes to implement.

4. **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications:** Provides a 1-3-page introduction to the applicant's organization, including:
 - a. The organization's mission, history, and goals
 - b. Qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this initiative including up to three work samples
 - c. The organization's experience in the content area specified in the application
5. **Proposal Design, Timeline & Strategies:** Provide a 5-7-page narrative describing the proposed project design and the activities/tasks as described in Section III that will be accomplished with the available resources. Include as part of the scope of services the major tasks, deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task by position.
6. **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors:** Provide a 1-3-page narrative describing any collaborative partners or subcontractors the applicant plans to work with in the development of a salary supplement program for infant and toddler teachers. Include partner or subcontractor name, address, and nonprofit or for-profit status. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward this project including resources. Attach copies of support letters from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable. Requested attachments will not count toward the applicant's page limitations.
7. **Line-Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet*:** Complete and submit three proposed line-item budgets according to the format provided with this RFA. The budgets shall reflect the funding needed for the periods of August 1, 2022- July 31, 2023, August 1, 2023- July 31, 2024, and August 1, 2024- July 31, 2025, and not to exceed \$500,000 per year. Also complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the "DCDEE Line-Item Budget & Narrative Instructions." The FTE worksheet is also required as part of this RFA. Please complete the FTE sheet first so that the line-item budget will populate Salary/Fringe values in Column C.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process for selecting applications for funding for this initiative. A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon review of each application, the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

1. **Proposal Summary** (Maximum of **10** points):
Response must reflect the applicant's understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III.

2. **Leadership Capacity** (Maximum of **20** points):
Response must reflect the applicant has the leadership capacity to effectively manage the proposed activity. The applicant must also demonstrate the capacity to serve as a subject matter expert on the given content area. Qualifications of key personnel must meet the applicant qualifications and capacity described in Section IV. Application includes a description of the key persons who will lead the initiative, including names, agency titles and the activities for which each person will be responsible. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified. The narrative must include the name of any proposed subcontractors, the organization affiliation, any links to sites which might verify the subcontractor's expertise or capacity to provide the selected services and the activities for which the sub-contractor will be responsible. If a subcontractor will be identified during the planning process, the applicant must provide a detailed plan of the process to obtain one and the qualifications sought.
3. **Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion and Equity:** (Maximum of **10** points):
Recognizing child outcomes vary disproportionately across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical and developmental ability, and geography, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to design and implement culturally responsive programming. To ensure the program that is developed is representative of and responsive to diverse identities of North Carolina families, the services provided by this contract (as well evidence of past work) shall include a focus of employing a diversity, equity, and inclusion framework in project development and execution.
4. **Initiative Design, Timeline & Strategies** (Maximum of **30** points):
Response must reflect an innovative design and methodology that will result in increased supports for the early care and education workforce and infrastructure as described in Section III. Timeline should be complete, logical, and realistic for the tasks proposed.
5. **Evaluation Plan:** (Maximum of **15** points):
Plan must reflect appropriate strategies for regularly assessing the achievement of interim and final outputs and outcomes for the project. A theory of change and logic model are highly encouraged. Applicant must also show evidence of the ability to anticipate and adjust for challenges that may arise throughout the evaluation process. Lastly, the applicant must identify program evaluation partners and the plan for engaging them during the planning phase. The partners can be anyone who will support program evaluation planning and implementation. They may be individuals or organizations with research and evaluation expertise, evaluation design, analysis and/or reporting; stakeholders with a vested interest in the proposed activity, such as advocacy organizations or families.
6. **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative and FTE Sheet*:** (Maximum of **15** points):
Budget must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must not exceed the total budget allotted and must follow all stipulations included in the budget

worksheet and narrative instructions. The plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures. If funding will be used for conference presentations, include the proposed conferences and the amount of funding which will be needed for those conferences.

Points can be added or reduced in any section for overall proper grammar usage and organization of the proposal.

Maximum Points: 100

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements for this project as described. Attachments will not count against the applicant's page limitations. The selection committee will submit recommendations to DCDEE based on the selection process described. The Division of Child Development and Early Education will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing and/or electronically no later than **5:00 pm on May 13, 2022**.

IX. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to DCDEE's website (<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New>) by **February 25, 2022**.
2. **An electronic submission** of the application must be received from each agency or organization. The submission must include an application face sheet with an electronic or scanned signature by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.
3. All applications must be received by DCDEE via email no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. **Paper copies or faxed applications will not be accepted.**
4. The date and time of application receipt will be documented by the date and time shown on the email submission received via DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov. Budgets and budget narratives are to be included as part of the application submitted.
5. The RFA evaluation team may request additional information from any or all applicants for clarification or to support the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluation team is not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and applicant's documented experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agencies or

organization's staff and cost. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.

7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
8. **Application Process Summary Dates**
 - 02/14/2022: Request for Applications issued
 - 02/15/2022: Bidder's Conference
 - 02/23/2022: Interested applications submit optional Notice of Intent no later than 5 pm
 - 02/23/2022: All questions due via email no later than 5 pm
 - 02/25/2022: Answers to Questions posted to the DCDEE website no later than 5 pm
 - 03/25/2022: Applications must be received via email no later than 5 pm
 - 05/13/2022: Successful applicant will be notified
 - 08/01/2022: Estimated contract start date.

X. GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

1. **Award or Rejection**

All complete and timely submitted applications will be evaluated and awards will be made to that agencies or organizations whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. The successful applicant will be notified by **May 13, 2022**.
2. **Cost of Application Preparation**

Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.
3. **Elaborate Applications**

Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond what is necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.
4. **Oral Explanations**

The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.
5. **Reference to Other Data**

Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not be considered.

6. Titles

Titles and headings in this RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.

7. Form of Application

Each application must be submitted utilizing the forms provided by DCDEE, and upon award, these forms will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

8. Exceptions

All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any agency or organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application.

9. Advertising

In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agree not to use the results of the selection process as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of DCDEE.

10. Right to Submitted Material

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.

11. Competitive Offer

Pursuant to the provision of N.C.G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

12. Agency and Organization's Representative

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions regarding the application.

13. Subcontracting

Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom.

14. Proprietary Information

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to

the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

15. Participation Encouraged

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

16. Gifts Ban

N.C.G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.

17. Contract/Funds Disbursement

DCDEE will issue a contract to the recipients of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point. To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, the selected applicants must submit a monthly reimbursement request to the Division for all expenses incurred.

18. Audit

Please be advised that successful applicants may be required to have an audit in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143C-6-22 and N.C.G.S. 143C-6-23 as applicable to the agency's status.

There are 3 reporting levels which are determined by the total direct grant receipts from all State agencies in the entity's fiscal year:

Level 1: Less than \$25,000

Level 2: At least \$25,000 but less than \$500,000

Level 3: \$500,000 or more. Level 3 grantees are required to submit a "Yellow Book" audit done by a CPA.

Only Level 3 grantees may include audit expenses on the budget. Audit expenses should be prorated based on the ratio of the grant to the total pass-through funds received by the entity.

19. Additional Documentation to Include with Application

All applicants are required to include documentation of their tax identification number. Those applicants which are private nonprofit agencies are to include a copy of an IRS determination letter regarding the agency's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. (This letter normally includes the agency's tax identification number, so it would also satisfy that documentation requirement.)

20. Federal Certifications

Agencies or organizations receiving federal funds are required to execute Federal certifications regarding non-discrimination, Drug-Free Workplace, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Debarment, Lobbying, and Lobbying Activities.

21. System for Award Management Database (SAM)

All grantees receiving federal funds must be actively registered in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) database or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the award (see www.sam.gov). To maintain an active SAM record, the record must be updated no less than annually.

22. Additional Documentation Prior to Contract Execution

Contracts will require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:

- a. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign contracts.
- b. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign expenditure reports.
- c. Documentation of the agency's DUNS number. Documentation consists of a copy of communication (such as a letter or email correspondence) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) which indicates the agency or organization's legal name, address, and DUNS number. In lieu of a document from D&B, a copy of the agency or organization's SAM record is acceptable.
- d. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the D&B online registration (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) to receive one free of charge. (DUNS is the acronym for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by D&B.)
- e. Contracts with private non-profit agencies require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, private non-profit agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:
 - i. A completed, signed, and notarized statement which includes the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy.
 - ii. A completed, signed, and notarized page certifying that the agency has no overdue tax debts.

- f. All grantees receiving funds through the State of North Carolina are required to execute Contractor Certifications Required by North Carolina Law. Contractor Certifications should **NOT** be generated, signed or returned with application.

Note: At the start of each calendar year, all agencies with current DCDEE contracts are required to update their contract documentation. These agencies will be contacted a few weeks prior to the due date and will be provided the necessary forms and instructions.

23. Registration with Secretary of State

Private non-profit applicants must also be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in North Carolina or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents. (See www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations.)

24. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement

The Contractor shall complete and submit to the Division, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement form within 10 State Business Days when awarded \$25,000 or more in federal funds.

25. Salary Limitation

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

The Appropriations Act of 2017 (N.C. Session Law 2017-57), which was adopted by reference in 2019 budget legislation, SECTION 6.4 limits the State funds used for the annual salary of any individual employee of a nonprofit organization to \$120,000.

Per the statute *"No more than one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) in State funds, including any interest earnings accruing from those funds, may be used for the annual salary of any individual employee of a nonprofit organization.*

- *The term "State funds" is defined by law in N.C.G.S. 143C-1-1(d)(25): Any moneys including federal funds deposited in the State treasury except moneys deposited in a trust fund or agency fund as described in G.S. 143C-1-3.*
- *HHSAR 331.101.70(b) Part 353: The salary rate limitation does not restrict the salary that an organization may pay an individual working under a Department of Health and Human Services contract or order; it merely limits the portion of that salary that may be paid with contract funds.*

- *The salary cap is for a 12-month period. That means that the cap amount is reduced for the 9-month academic period or 3 months contract period.*
- *The cap is for a 1.0 FTE. That means the cap is proportionally reduced for a .75 or .50 FTE."*

XI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The following items must be included in the application. Please assemble the application in the following order in the format identified in Section VII on page 12:

- ☐ Application Checklist – Item 1
- ☐ Application Face Sheet – Item 2
- ☐ Proposal Summary/Design/Evaluation Plan – Item 3
- ☐ List of Subcontractors – Item 4
- ☐ Line-Item Budget & FTE Worksheet – Item 5
- ☐ Indirect Cost Rate Approval Letter (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Commitment or Statements of Support – Item 6
- ☐ IRS Tax Status Documentation – Item 7
 - a. IRS letter documenting your organization's tax identification number
 - OR
 - b. IRS determination letter regarding your organization's 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for private nonprofits